

## Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DRC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1035

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E O 11652: N/A

1. POST IS SUBMITTING UNDER SEPARATE COVER LATEST PORI AND ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH POLLS. NOT INCLUDED IN THESE, BUT REPORTED IN PRESS, ARE OTHER LATE POLLS PREDICTING TRENDS IN ISRAELI POLITICAL THINKING CHARACTERIZED ABOVE ALL BY THEIR CONFLICTING CONCLUSIONS. LATEST PORI POLL TAKEN DEC 11-16 INDICATED THAT IF ELECTION HELD AT THAT TIME LIKUD WOULD WIN 49 SEATS IN THE 120 SEAT KNESSET (IN COMPARISON TO ITS PRESENT 31), WHILE THE LABOR ALIGNMENT WOULD WIN 48 SEATS (IN COMPARISON TO ITS PRESENT 57). THE TREND INDICATED BY PORI WOULD LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ISRAEL THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WILL BE A CHANGE IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. TWENTY PER CENT OF THOSE POLLED DECLARED THEMSELVES TO BE UNDECIDED. IN CONTRAST, POLL CONDUCTED DECEMBER 16-18 BY HEWLETT UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH SHOWS LABOR ALIGNMENT RECEIVING 50 PERCENT OF THE VOTES AND THE LIKUD 29 PERCENT, WITH 40 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED STILL UNDECIDED. A SEPARATE LABOR ALIGNMENT COMMISSIONED POLL CONDUCTED IN MID-DECEMBER PREDICTED THAT THE ALIGNMENT WILL WIN 50 SEATS AND THE LIKUD 38, WHILE THE LATEST ISRAEL GALLUP POLL GAVE THE ALIGNMENT 51 SEATS AND THE LIKUD 40.

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2. AT LEAST TWO FEATURES OF THESE POLLS UNDERScore THEIR TENUOUSNESS: A) THE LARGE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE UNDECIDED AND B) THE FACT THAT THESE POLLS DO NOT INCLUDE A LARGE ENOUGH SAMPLING OF SOLDIERS CURRENTLY STATIONED ON GOLAN HEIGHTS OR SINAI FRONTS.

3. WHAT IS CLEAR FROM THESE POLLS IS GENERAL VIEW SHARED BY ISRAELI POLITICIANS AND POLITICAL COMMENTATORS THAT IN WAKE OF WAR, PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR LABOR ALIGNMENT STRENGTH HAS DECLINED WHILE THAT OF LIKUD HAS RISEN.

4. OF ALL THE ISRAELI POLLS MENTIONED ABOVE USIS BELIEVES THE PORI POLL TO BE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AND RELIABLE. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE LATEST PORI POLL FINDINGS WERE DRAWN FROM A TOTAL LIST OF 1200 PEOPLE POLLED. THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY POLL, ON THE HAND, POLLED ONLY 350. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ISRAELIS ARE NOTORIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO REVEAL THEIR TRUE VIEWS TO POLLING ORGANIZATIONS. PORI POLLS HAVE DESIGNED A SPECIAL QUESTIONNAIRE TO MINIMIZE EFFECTS OF THIS ISRAEL PRACTICE AND ALSO HAVE A SPECIAL WEIGHTED FIGURE THEY APPLY TO COMPENSATE FOR THE ISRAELI PRACTICE OF NOT WISHING TO APPEAR TO SUPPORT THE LIKUD PARTY, WHICH HAS RESIDUAL CONNOTATIONS OF HERUT'S UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY IN PRE-STATE PERIOD.

5. AMBASSADOR AND STAFF ARE CABLING TODAY THEIR ESTIMATE OF LIKELY ELECTION OUTCOME, WHICH DIFFERS FROM PORI POLL ABOVE.  
MOSS

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